

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: High-Level PW/MIA Mission to Vietnam and Laos (U)

(C) Your National PW/MIA Recognition Day remarks stressed the Administration's intention to obtain the fullest possible accounting of our missing servicemen in Indochina. Since the 1973 Paris Agreement, our efforts have included discussions in New York between the Vietnamese Ambassador to the UN and State and Defense representatives as well as discussions between our respective Embassies in Bangkok and Paris. We believe that, in addition to these and other efforts, it would be advantageous at this juncture to send a high-level mission to Hanoi and Vientiane to emphasize continued United States Government determination to resolve the PW/MIA issue properly.

(C) The recent repatriation of American remains could mark the beginning of Vietnamese cooperation on accounting and we propose that a mission explore this possibility solely within the context of humanitarian considerations by meeting directly with the Vietnamese in Hanoi. The mission would focus exclusively on the PW/MIA issue and be clearly non-political in character so as to neither affect adversely our Kampuchean strategy nor to lead our friends and allies to believe mistakenly that the mission implies any policy change in our bilateral relations with Hanoi. In instructions to the U.S. delegation we would be absolutely clear that, if raised by the Vietnamese or Lao, we would not be prepared to discuss economic relations in any form. In conjunction with this proposal, we also would have State and Defense Deputy Assistant Secretaries meet with the Vietnamese Permanent Representative to the UN in New York and the Lao Charge' in Washington to propose and discuss the high-level mission.

(C) We recommend that you approve the appointment of a Defense official with knowledge of PW/MIA matters to head a mission to Hanoi and Vientiane to press for cooperation in resolving the PW/MIA accounting issue.

Secretary of State

Secretary of Defense